

VZCZCXYZ0001  
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHC #9783 2712205  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH ZDS  
P 242122Z SEP 09  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO RUEHRK/AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK PRIORITY 9759-9760  
INFO RUCPDO/USDOC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY 5874-5875

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 099783

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 099783

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

2ND C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDED SIPDIS, PORTION MARKINGS-  
PARA'S 1, 5 & 6 AND TEXT)  
COMMERCE PASS TO NOAA (MEDINA)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/25/2019  
TAGS: [EFIS](#) [IC](#) [KSCA](#) [PGOV](#) [SENV](#) [IWC](#)  
SUBJECT: US PARTICIPATION IN JOINT DEMARCHE TO ICELAND ON  
ITS WHALING ACTIVITIES

Classified By: OES/OPA, Evan Bloom for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: This is an action request. Post is requested TO participate in a joint demarche to the Government of Iceland concerning their recent decisions regarding whaling activities. The text of the demarche is contained in paragraph 5. The United Kingdom has agreed to lead the demarche, and is joined by the governments of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Chile, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United States and Uruguay. The demarche is meant to encourage the GOI to review its policies towards whaling and whale conservation, and take into account the significant economic and social benefits that come from the whale watching industry, as well as welcome the GOI's participation in discussions on the Future of the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

BACKGROUND:

¶2. (SBU) The GOI government issued a whaling quota of 150 fin and 200 minke whales for the 2009/2010 whaling season this spring. This quota is based on the scientific advice provided by the Icelandic Marine Research Institute. As of September 15, 2009, Iceland has taken 117 fin whales and 70 minke whales. All expectations are that by the end of the whaling season, the fin whale quota will be met. This represents a very significant increase in whaling activity by Iceland. Since resuming commercial whaling activities in 2006, Iceland had harvested 45 minke whales and 7 fin whales total prior to this season. It is important to note that fin whale is not largely consumed in Iceland. Therefore it is speculated that this large fin whale harvest will be exported to Japan (note: there are several non-governmental organizations who believe that the Japanese market is currently saturated by Japan's own whaling activities).

¶3. (C) It is widely thought within the IWC community that, as a condition to joining the European Union, Iceland will need to end commercial whaling activities. Many speculate that the dramatic increase in whaling operations this season is one last effort to whale before this decision is made. Alternative views are that the whaling industry is demonstrating its capability to discourage EU membership. The GOI has commissioned a study to review all economic benefits that surround whale conservation and the whaling industry, including whale watching.

¶4. (SBU) The United States is a leader within the International Whaling Commission, and is committed to

resolving the discord that has paralyzed the organization for decades. We remain committed to the Future of the IWC process, and are looking forward to the Support Group to be held in Santiago, October 5-16, 2009. We are approaching this Support Group meeting with flexibility in mind, and encouraging all participants of the Support Group, including Iceland, to do the same.

DEMARCHE TEXT:

¶5. (SBU) the Governments of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Chile, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States and Uruguay, wish to express our support for the Government of Iceland's decision to review and reassess its position on the hunting of whales.

We are deeply disappointed with the former Icelandic Government's decision to authorize the hunting of fin and minke whales over the next five years on 27 January 2009. The authorization was put in place without presentation to the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and without regard for the long-term interests of cetacean conservation. We further note that the Icelandic marine Research Institute recommended in June an increased quota of up to 200 fin and 200 minke whales for the 2009/2010 season and that almost 200 whales have been killed so far.

We encourage the Government of Iceland to adhere to the internationally agreed moratorium on commercial whaling and to re-examine the decision to increase its fin and minke whale quota.

Both species are listed under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Appendix I and we remain extremely concerned with Iceland's reservation, entered in 2000, for these and other cetacean species. We urge Iceland to withdraw this reservation and safeguard these species from international trade.

We recognize the conservation efforts made by Iceland in other international agreements and hope the Icelandic Government will be able to extend this stance to fully support global efforts for cetacean conservation. Furthermore, we would like to draw attention to the considerable economic, social and educational benefits of Iceland's growing whale watching industry and share our strong endorsement of the Icelandic Governments plans to designate specific ocean areas for whale watching. We hope this action will reinforce Iceland's commitment, as a member of the Support Group, to the future of the IWC discussions on the management and conservation of all whale species.

In summary, we support the Icelandic Government's decision to reassess its position on commercial whaling and once again call upon Iceland to respect the IWC's global moratorium and end its commercial whaling.

¶6. (SBU) The Department greatly appreciate's post assistance IN this matter. OES/OPA point of contact on this matter is Elizabeth Phelps, reachable on unclass email at phelpse@state.gov, class email at phelpse@state.sgov.gov, or phone at 202-647-0241.  
CLINTON